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SUBJ

REF PM220905 LONDON THE OBSERVER ENGLISH 21 OCT -- USSR COLONEL:
SOVIET 'MISTAKES,' WESTERN 'HYSTERIA' COULD CAUSE WAR

TAKE 1 OF 3 -- UK MAGAZINE CITES SOVIET ' ADVISER ' ON WAR DANGER

PM241151

LFEDS DETENTE IN ENGLISH NO. 1 OCTOBER 84 PP 2-3

((INTERVIEW WITH UNNAMED SOVIET COLONEL BY UNNAMED CORRESPONDENT
IN MOSCOW, DATE NOT SPECIFIED))

((TEXT)) THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW ABOUT THE WAR DANGER WAS
CONDUCTED BY ONE OF DETENTE'S CORRESPONDENTS (D) ON A RECENT VISIT
TO MOSCOW. COL. X IS A FORMER ARMY OFFICER WHO NOW WORKS AS AN
ADVISER ON INTERNATIONAL AND DEFENCE AFFAIRS. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED
BY COL. X ARE PERSONAL ONES, AND SHOULD NOT BE ASSUMED
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MAINSTREAM OF OFFICIAL SOVIET THINKING IN ALL
RESPECTS.

D: COL. X, CAN THERE REALLY BE A RISK OF WAR BETWEEN THE SOVIET
UNION AND THE WEST? IS THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST BETWEEN THE TWO
SIDES SO VERY SHARP?

COL. X: NO, THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST IS NOT SO SHARP. THERE ARE
NO SIGNIFICANT TERRITORIAL DISPUTES. NEITHER SIDE THREATENS THE
VITAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF THE OTHER. AND, YET, STRANGE AS IT MAY
SEEM, THERE REALLY IS A RISK OF WAR. FOR US IN THIS COUNTRY, WAR
NO LONGER APPEARS JUST AN ABSTRACT POSSIBILITY, AS IT DID
EVEN A YEAR AGO. THERE IS A FEELING THAT THINGS REALLY MIGHT
COME TO THAT.

THE MAIN DANGER LIES IN THE ESCALATION OF SOME REGIONAL
CONFLICT. FOR EXAMPLE: THE U.S. INVADES NICARAGUA, CUBA COMES TO
NICARAGUA'S ASSISTANCE, THE U.S. INVADES CUBA AND THEN WE INTERVENE
IN DEFENCE OF CUBA.

D: CONFLICT IS NOT LIKELY TO ARISE IN EUROPE?

COL. X: EUROPE IS STABLE, BUT WHAT STARTS ELSEWHERE WILL FINISH IN EUROPE.

ONE VERY UNSTABLE REGION, TO WHICH IN MY OPINION PUBLIC OPINION PAYS TOO LITTLE ATTENTION IS THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT. I FEAR THERE WILL BE A SIXTH INDO- PAKISTANI WAR, WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA DRAWN IN ON THE SIDE OF PAKISTAN AND THE USSR ON THE SIDE OF INDIA. WHAT A HORRIBLE PORRIDGE THAT WILL MAKE!

D: BUT THE GREAT POWERS DID NOT INTERVENE IN THE FIRST FIVE INDO- PAKISTANI WARS. WHY SHOULD THEY IN THE SIXTH?

COL. X: IT DEPENDS ON THE RESTRAINT SHOWN BY POLITICAL LEADERS. EVEN WITH CARTER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH EASIER TO CONTROL SUCH SITUATIONS. WITH REAGAN, THE DANGERS OF ESCALATION ARE MUCH GREATER.

D: AND SOVIET LEADERS?

COL. X: OUR LEADERS VARY, OF COURSE, IN THEIR PERSONAL QUALITIES. SOME ARE CAPABLE OF GREATER INITIATIVE THAN OTHERS IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. BUT THE MAIN LINE OF OUR POLICY IS FIRM.

D: BUT OCCASIONALLY, DO YOU NOT THINK, THERE MAY BE... MISTAKES?

COL. X: YES, BUT MISTAKES IN THEMSELVES NEED NOT BE SO DANGEROUS. IF THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD FOR WHAT THEY ARE, AS MISTAKES, AND NOT AS ELEMENTS IN SOME VAST AGGRESSIVE PLAN. IT IS THE COMBINATION OF OUR MISTAKES AND YOUR HYSTERIA THAT IS SO VERY DANGEROUS.

D: PERHAPS YOU COULD BE A LITTLE MORE SPECIFIC?

COL. X: FOR EXAMPLE, THE MISINTERPRETATION OF MISTAKES WE MAY MAKE ON OUR SOUTHERN BORDER IN TERMS OF A SUPPOSED DRIVE TOWARDS THE PERSIAN GULF.

D: BUT HOW CAN WESTERN GOVERNMENTS BE ABSOLUTELY SURE YOU DO NOT HAVE DESIGNS ON THE GULF?

COL. X: THE USSR IS MORE THAN SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ENERGY. WHAT
NEED DO WE HAVE OF GULF OIL?

D: BUT YOUR AIM, SOME ARGUE, IS TO CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR
THE WEST.

COL. X: OUR OWN PLANS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HAVE PRESUPPOSED WESTERN PROSPERITY!

D: THE SOVIET UNION DOES AT LEAST SEEK TO EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE
IN THE THIRD WORLD.

COL. X: WE STILL FEEL ALONE IN A HOSTILE WORLD, AND NATURALLY WE
LOOK FOR ALLIES. BUT THESE ALLIES, OR CLIENTS, ARE EXTREMELY
EXPENSIVE FOR US TO MAINTAIN. IF DETENTE IS MADE SECURE, I DO NOT
THINK WE SHALL BE SO KEEN TO COLLECT NEW CLIENTS.

(MORE) OCT 84 24/1308Z OCT

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